Supply of State Manual to members of the Legislature.

7. * **Mr. K. M. Kesavan** (*Karunagapally, Karthigapally and Ambalapuzha* cum *Shertala*): Will the Government be pleased to state whether they have as yet supplied the members of the Legislature with copies of any part of the State Manual of Travancore written by Sadasyatilaka T. K. Velu Pillai?

Rajyasevapravina G. Parameswaran Pillai: No. Copies of such publications are not usually supplied to members of the Legislature. But they are available in the Legislative Library.

Mr. K. M. Kesavan: May I know whether there is not a rule that all publications of Government should be given to the members of the Legislature?

Rajyasevapravina G. Parameswaran Pillai: There is no rule compelling Government to supply free of charge all the publications of Government.

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT.

President: Order, order. At this juncture I feel it my duty, albeit that I have had occasion elsewhere to deal with certain matters of policy on the part of Government, to address this House also. To-day brings us news of a very grave character. Japan has declared war on England and the United States. The first shots or the first bombs have fallen in places not far removed from India. The war is approaching this country. What the war and the off-shoot and the consequences of the war might bring to India we cannot now say or prognosticate. But there are certain matters which even a small part of the great continent of India like Travancore will have to keep in mind and will have to provide for.

One of the points that I wish to urge very strongly is that no other activity, no other method and no other plan which will not tend to help in war effort or in an effort which is equally important with war effort, to make this State self-sufficient in the matter of food, clothing and raiment, should occupy the concentrated attention of the people of Travancore. What pecuniary sacrifices, what other sacrifices we may be called upon to make, Providence alone knows. But this is certain, that the times are at hand when belts have to be tightened, when new financial and other policies might have to be adumbrated and carried into effect, when it might be necessary even to get more from the people than this Government have attempted to do till now. I may at once, in passing, remark that the Government have definitely not made any attempts to tax the people on a very large scale or even to ask for voluntary contributions on a large scale, because Government are convinced that Travancore is one of the distressed areas produced by the war. Comparing big things with small things, comparing grave issues

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[President.]

with comparatively minor issues, it may be said with a little exaggeration perhaps, but with no flinching from truth, that Travancore is as much hit by the war as any part of England. If England is bombarded and is subject to various threats to-day, we are subject to a threat of starvation, starvation by lack of import, starvation by lack of market for export. If the United States goes into the war, the cashewnut market is stopped. If the United States goes into the war and the war spreads, ilmenite and monasite and all the industries dependent upon mineral sands stop automatically. It may be that coir may be regarded as a war essential. There are signs that it may be, but it may not, in which case that source of industry also is dried up. What does it mean? It means that without the possibility of getting any market for any of our exportable commodities we shall have to purchase or to import rice and yarn. That is the bare position as it stands to-day. But lest I should be charged with overdrawing the picture and making too great a play with the melancholy situation, I may say that Government have already taken some steps and are actively taking others to relieve the situation. Government have already initiated pourparlers with Burma and with the southern part of India for the purchase and storing of rice. I may warn honourable members that it is possible that Government may have to lose over the transaction, but it is better to lose a few thousands or even a few lakhs than allow the people to go to the verge of starvation. Similarly, in regard to yarn, steps are taken to facilitate and expedite the supply of yarn to all parts of the State. It will be remembered that not many days ago, elsewhere a statement was made by me, that nothing that Government can do can avert Japan's declaration of war if she is determined to make that declaration and that with the utmost sympathy for the mover of the adjournment motion I do not see how we can influence the course of the negotiations between Mr. Cordel Hull and Mr. Kurusu. To-day I have received two notices of adjournment motions with regard to the serious situation caused by the rise in the price of articles of food and with regard to weavers and yarn. Let me say this, that no member can say that Government yields to him in the tremendous anxiety which animates Government for the purpose of giving relief to weavers and to bring about the wherewithal to supply weavers with yarn and to give them a subsistence. Every step that Government could take by way of prevention of export, of speculation, of artificial inflation of prices and of profiteering, will be taken without fear and without favour. But whether we could get supplies from outside depends on a number of factors. All that Government can ask the honourable members to do is to give them their goodwill and their co-operation and to trust Government to do what they can in a situation which is as menacing as it is serious.

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There is one thing I might add. Time was when most of us were rather shy of our tapioca. Nutrition experts had stated, and I was amongst them, that tapioca should be eschewed, because it is not sufficiently nutritious. But there may come occasions perhaps when straw or grass is the only alternative between starvation and non-starvation. I am therefore going to make an appeal in direct contradiction and contravention of what I myself stated from this place and on public platforms, that every possible available ground should be cultivated with tapioca in view to the possible situation that might be caused by the crisis which confronts us. Tapioca is a three or four-monthly crop. A month has elapsed since the last planting began and I am told that even now the planting can be resorted to. If that is so, it is necessary that the Government and the people alike should take the necessary steps to get something at least to live upon. Tapioca and fish will probably be the only things on which we will have to live. And that is an appeal that I am now making to the honourable members of this House and through them to the public outside.

I had stated elsewhere that in order to meet the situation absolute peace and calm and co-operation between all sections of the people and Government are essential, and are a *sine qua non*. I am glad to be able to say that in the main such absolute peace and calm now prevails in the State. Taking advantage of that peace and of that calm this Government have released those who are called, sometimes miscalled, political prisoners—everybody who went to jail or was detained for a cause which may have a direct or a remote bearing on politics, opinions and pursuit of certain opinions, with one exception, namely, communism and revolution. A large number of persons have been released; and Government have in contemplation the release practically of all the rest within a very few weeks, if not days.

Side by side with that,—I had said elsewhere and I wish to repeat it here because it is but due to this honourable House that it should be taken directly into confidence,—it is not possible to arrange for holding elections in June or July 1942. Steps will have to be taken for printing the voters' lists, and for getting the lists of voters revised. But there is dearth of paper for that printing. In the first place, paper will become even more scarce in the next few weeks. Partly on that ground and partly on the ground of petrol rationing the elections will have to be postponed. Petrol rationing will be very very keen indeed, because the Dutch East Indies is directly within the theatre of war and practically our requirements will have to be met with such portion of petrol from Persia and Burma as is available. Therefore petrol rationing will get to be much stricter than it is at present. Taking these circumstances into account, it will not be doing justice to the constituencies,

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[President.]

nor to the members who may be returned, to allow them to make all the preparations for a fresh election. Therefore Government have decided that the life of this legislature should be extended by another year.

Now, let me mention another matter also. There is no salvation for this country unless very rapid industrialisation takes place, so that we might produce things which other people have to purchase. From that point of view, the Aluminium Factory has been given certain concessions and will start work, it is expected confidently, in August 1942, and around that will be created other subsidiary industries. Government are taking steps to start a Plywood Factory which will mean that their products *must be* purchased. Tea chests will not now be available from anywhere else. And if the British Government and the United States want any tea from India tea chests will have to be purchased from that factory. The future of that factory and the future industrialisation so far as the Aluminium Factory and the industries surrounding it are concerned are certainly bright. Government have also decided to start on a very big road programme for the relief of distress in Shertala and other coastal areas. (*Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi*: *Hear, hear.*) But that will not be a temporary programme. It will not be a kind of road like the ones that we have already. It will be a cement concrete road programme for the State. That means that cement must be procured. Government have taken steps already and have entered into agreement with the foremost and the only cement combine in India for the purpose of supplying cement at factory rates. We propose to take advantage of it and even before the starting of the cement factory in Travancore those rates are in operation. In other words, that company has as a result of negotiations promised to give us cement at the price at which cement could be purchased if a factory were established here. Government propose to take the fullest advantage of it and extend their road programme on that basis. In this connection a journal stated thus—

> "The endeavour to establish the Aluminium and other factories which tend to the progress of industrialisation of Travancore is a wholly welcome feature. In these industrial concerns that are started, arrangements should be made for Travancoreans to take shares and to secure employment and labour. If this is done, Travancoreans will have a voice in the management of these industries and the question of unemployment could also be partly solved."

With regard to employment and labour, we have made a condition with every one of these companies that they must predominantly employ Travancore labour and that not only inferior but superior appointments should be preferentially given to Travancoreans. I have heard complaints that some concerns do not fulfil

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those conditions. Such instances have come to my notice and Government are taking steps with reference to such complaints. But with regard to shares, let me say this. Judging by the calamitous results that have followed from Government appeal for funds from Travancoreans in the matter of the Travancore Sugars and the Travancore Rubbers, Government without being deterred by those results will still give the fullest possible facilities for Travancoreans to take shares in every future concern. But Government cannot wait for five or ten years before a sum of Rs. 10,000 comes in. What has happened till now? Government started the Sugar Factory. What was the proportion of shares that Travancoreans took to the shares that people outside took? The result is that the dividends of that company are certainly going to non-Travancoreans. I have said so a hundred times and I can say it a thousand times. The opportunities are wasted, I had almost said deliberately wasted, by the people of Travancore, because they would rather put money into a speculative bank or some mushroom concern or some lottery outside the State or things of that kind, rather than in an industrial venture which is backed by the State. So long as that phenomenon exists, these journals might say what they like, but the results will be calamitous. In regard to the Plywood Factory I wish to give one week's time for Travancoreans to take shares. If they do not take shares within that time, Government will take all the shares and Government hope at some later time, say 5, 10 or 15 years later, when the people of Travancore realise their mistakes and when they begin to take an interest in such concerns and begin to take a live interest in the floating of this concern, some of those shares may become available to the Travancoreans. In the meantime, the State as the guardian and the trustee of the people of the State will have to take all the shares in so far as those shares do not come from outside.

My final appeal is this. This, as I said, is a serious juncture in the history of the world and not less in the history of Travancore. We want co-operation, not verbal co-operation but co-operation in the matter of sacrifice, co-operation in the matter of forwarding the industrial effort without which the future of this country will be gloomy indeed. I am confident of such co-operation and with that confidence I trust that this honourable House will do its utmost to be a propagandist machine of those objects and purposes which I have endeavoured with humility to place before this House.

Mr. James Fletcher: Since the statement made by the President the necessity for moving the adjournment motions given notice of by me is non-existent. I do not move them.

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